
DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

Minor parents and their children should live under adult supervision to ensure that they are in a safe, nurturing environment. Adult parents should act as the caretakers of their minor children and provide maintenance, physical care, and guidance, even after a minor child has become a parent. When living with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is not possible, the minor parent and child should live in another adult-supervised living arrangement.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

FIP

All minor parents must live in an adult-supervised living arrangement as a condition of eligibility. A minor parent and the dependent child in his or her care must live with the minor parent's parent, stepparent, or legal guardian or have good cause to live elsewhere. A minor parent who has good cause for not living with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian must live in an acceptable adult-supervised living arrangement.

A minor parent living in a parent's or stepparent's home may not receive assistance on his/her own behalf, but must be treated as the dependent child of the parent or stepparent. A minor parent living in an adult relative's or legal guardian's home must be included as a dependent child in the relative's/legal guardian's group if the relative/legal guardian also receives benefits under the Family Independence Program (FIP); see BEM 210, Multi-Generation and Combined Groups.

DEFINITIONS

Minor Parent: a person under age 18 who is not emancipated and is either the parent of a dependent child living with him/her or is pregnant.

A person under age 18 is emancipated if:

- Ever validly married.
- Emancipated by court order.
- On active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States.

Acceptable Adult-Supervised Living Arrangement: a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) -approved

living arrangement, other than the home of the parent, stepparent, or legal guardian, in which the minor parent and child live with an adult who acts as a parent to the minor parent. See Acceptable Living Arrangements in this item for specific criteria.

Adult Relative: a person age 18 or over who is related to the minor parent as grandparent (including great and great-great), aunt or uncle (including great and great-great), sibling or stepsibling, nephew or niece, first cousin, first cousin once removed, or the parent of the putative (alleged) father.

Supervising Adult: a person who accepts responsibility for the supervision of a minor parent, and is an adult relative of the minor parent or is an unrelated person age 21 or over.

INFORMING CLIENTS

When a minor parent applies for assistance, inform them of all of the following:

- The requirement to live under adult supervision.
- The circumstances under which there is good cause for permitting the minor parent to live in an adult-supervised setting other than the home of a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian.
- The requirement to attend school if the minor parent has not completed high school.

When a minor parent who is not living with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian applies for assistance, inform him/her that MDHHS will determine good cause. Do not approve assistance, except for MA and FAP.

REFERRALS

Record information about the minor parent's circumstances in Bridges.

Bridges will generate a task/reminder when a CPS referral is needed. See the Administrative Policy Manual Human Resources (APR) - Mandated Reporters Child, for information regarding how to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

**Protective
Services
Complaint**

A complaint to Children's Protective Services (CPS) is required if any of the following are true:

- There is reason to suspect that either the minor parent or the child is endangered, abused, or neglected.
- The financial needs, safety, and security of the minor parent and child cannot be assured during the period of eligibility determination for FIP.
- The minor parent became pregnant when she was under the age of 12.
- The parent, stepparent, or legal guardian will not allow the minor parent to live in his/her home.

Law Enforcement

A referral to local law enforcement is required if:

The minor parent became pregnant when she was between the ages of 12 and 16. The purpose of this referral is so local law enforcement can determine if the situation should be investigated or referred to the prosecuting attorney if the minor parent is a victim of criminal sexual conduct. Local offices must develop guidelines for such referrals with the local prosecuting attorney. Use the DHS-1266, Law Enforcement Referral, form to initiate this referral.

**Minor Parent
Coordinator**

Local offices must designate a minor parent coordinator to coordinate the delivery of services to minor parents. Refer all minor parents who refuse to comply with the requirements of this policy or withdraw their request for assistance to the minor parent coordinator. The department offers services to minor parents whether eligible for assistance benefits or not.

**GOOD CAUSE
REASONS - LIVING
ARRANGEMENT**

The good cause reasons for not requiring a minor parent and his/her child to live with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian are:

- The minor parent is living with another adult relative with parental consent.
- The minor parent has no living parent, stepparent, or legal guardian whose whereabouts is known. At a minimum, do a Bridges Individual Inquiry on the parent's/stepparent's/legal guardian's name(s) to attempt to locate them.
- The parent, stepparent, or legal guardian will not allow the minor parent to live in his/her home. A CPS complaint is required because of neglect. Do not delay other actions or the eligibility determination awaiting the CPS determination.
- The physical or emotional health or safety of the minor parent or dependent child would be jeopardized if they lived with the minor parent's parent, stepparent, or legal guardian because:
 - An investigated CPS complaint (confirmed or unconfirmed) indicates that the minor parent or other children in the household did not receive adequate food, clothing, medical care or other necessities or were physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. An unconfirmed complaint must have indicated that there was risk to the children although the allegations could not be substantiated.
 - The return of the minor parent and child to the parent's, stepparent's, or legal guardian's home would result in violation of the terms of a lease or violation of local health or safety standards.
 - Law enforcement officers have verbally verified that there is probable cause to believe that the home of the parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is the scene of illegal activity.
- The minor parent is participating in a licensed substance abuse treatment program which would no longer be available if he/she returned to the parent's, stepparent's or legal guardian's home.

- The minor parent's parent, stepparent or legal guardian lives in another state.

Reevaluate good cause if it is discovered that circumstances regarding the good cause reason have changed.

Local Office Exception

The local office director may grant an exception to this policy and allow the minor parent to live independently when all of the following are true:

- Attending school full-time.
- Participating in a MDHHS or Teen Parent services plan.
- Moving would require the minor parent to change schools.
- The independent living arrangement will provide adequate structure and safety for the minor parent and child.

Follow local office procedure for requesting such exceptions. Local offices must maintain a record of these exceptions for annual reporting to the legislature.

DETERMINING GOOD CAUSE - LIVING ARRANGEMENT

The standard of promptness is 30 calendar days to determine if the minor parent has good cause for not living in the home of the parent, stepparent, or legal guardian. The client must move into the home of the parent, stepparent, or legal guardian unless he/she has good cause for refusing. Document good cause determinations in the case record.

At local office discretion, determinations of good cause and evaluations and supervision of acceptable living arrangements may be assigned to children's services staff instead of the specialist.

No Good Cause

If the minor parent does not have good cause, do all of the following:

- Record the fact that there is no good cause in Bridges.
- Run EDBC and certify the FIP denial in Bridges.

- Offer services to assist the minor parent to return home.
- Make a referral to a teen parent contractor or other community services to work with the minor parent, if appropriate.
- Make a referral to the local office minor parent coordinator if the client refuses to comply with the requirements.

Good Cause Granted

If the minor parent has good cause:

- Inform the minor parent that:
 - He/she must live in an adult-supervised living arrangement approved by the department.
 - The department will assist him/her in locating an acceptable adult-supervised arrangement if necessary.
 - FIP cannot be opened until the minor parent is living in an acceptable adult-supervised living arrangement.
- Determine if the minor parent's current living arrangement is acceptable.
- Help the minor parent to select an acceptable living arrangement, if necessary.

Minor parents age 16 and over have primary responsibility for finding and selecting an acceptable adult-supervised living arrangement. Assist the minor parent if necessary.

Notify your area service center if the minor parent, with the department's assistance, is unable to locate an acceptable adult-supervised living arrangement within 30 calendar days.

ACCEPTABLE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

A minor parent cannot live with the child's other parent, regardless of the other parent's age, unless both reside in an acceptable adult-supervised living arrangement. The child's adult parent may not function as the supervising adult to the minor parent.

Acceptable adult-supervised living arrangements are:

- The home of an adult relative.
- The home of an unrelated adult age 21 or over. These arrangements include private homes and cooperative and congregate living facilities.
- A licensed foster family home or foster family group home.

Supervision of a minor parent in family foster care may be purchased from a licensed private child placing agency.

- A child welfare-licensed residential facility.

If placement in a foster home or residential facility is selected, a DHS-3813, Voluntary Placement Agreement, must be signed by the minor parent's parent or legal guardian. If the only acceptable living arrangement is in a foster home or residential facility and if the parent/legal guardian refuses to sign an agreement, make a referral to CPS for a petition for court jurisdiction.

DETERMINING ACCEPTABLE LIVING ARRANGEMENT

Determine if the minor parent's living arrangement is acceptable. The living arrangement must be one of those described in **ACCEPTABLE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS** in this item and must do all of the following:

- Support the minor parent's efforts to complete a high school education or participate in employment and training opportunities.
- Support the minor parent's efforts to learn parenting skills and enhance decision-making skills.
- Provide a safe environment which supports the minor parent's responsibilities to provide food, clothing, and medical care to the child.

Use the guidelines under **Safety Assessment** and **Supportive Environment Assessment** in this item to determine if the living arrangement meets the above criteria.

Safety Assessment

The living arrangement must not include individuals (other than parents, stepparents, or legal guardians when reunification is appropriate) who are listed as perpetrators on the CPS Central Registry. Request a check of all individuals over age 18 in the home against the CPS Central Registry.

If it is suspected at any time that either the minor parent or the child is endangered, abused, or neglected, make an immediate referral to CPS. Some indications that a CPS referral should be made are:

- The child or minor parent has marks or bruises which appear suspicious.
- The child is fearful of the parent or other people living in or having access to the home.
- The living conditions are hazardous or present a public health threat.
- The minor parent or child appear malnourished.
- The minor parent or another person living in or having access to the home exhibits violent behavior.
- The minor parent describes or acts toward the child in predominately negative terms or has unrealistic expectations, or the supervising adult or another person in the household exhibits similar behavior to the minor parent.
- Family members or household members refuse access to the minor parent or child, or there is reason to believe that the minor parent is about to flee, or the minor parent's child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained.
- The minor parent is unwilling or unable to meet his/her own or the child's needs for food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- The minor parent's use of alcohol or drugs seriously affects his/her ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child.
- The minor parent fails to protect himself/herself or the child from physical harm or threatened physical harm, neglect, or sexual abuse by other family or household members or others having access to the child.

- The minor parent does not provide the supervision needed to protect the child from potential harm:
 - The minor parent does not attend to the child to the extent that the child's need for care goes unnoticed or unmet (for example, allows the child to wander outdoors alone, play with dangerous objects, or be exposed to other serious hazards).
 - The minor parent leaves the child alone in the home.
 - The minor parent makes inadequate/inappropriate child care arrangements or demonstrates very poor planning for the child's care.
- The minor parent has experienced incidents of domestic violence.

Supportive Environment Assessment

Determine if the living arrangement is a supportive environment for the minor parent. A supportive environment is one in which:

- The minor parent has a support person, such as the supervising adult, family members, neighbors, or other people in the community who are available to support and help the minor parent.
- The supervising adult discusses issues of concern with the minor parent and solutions are identified and pursued.
- The supervising adult does not take over parenting of the minor parent's child but demonstrates and discusses appropriate parenting techniques and skills.
- The supervising adult establishes reasonable house rules regarding visitors, curfews, phone usage, and care of the minor parent's child.
- The supervising adult is available to the minor parent when the minor parent experiences a problem.
- The minor parent has child care and transportation resources to enable attendance at school or work.

**RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE
SUPERVISING
ADULT**

By agreeing to be the supervising adult, a person assumes certain responsibilities. These must be explained to and accepted by the supervising adult. These responsibilities include:

- The supervising adult agrees to be the protective payee of the minor parent's FIP grant. As protective payee, the supervising adult must manage the minor parent's grant and help the minor parent learn to manage money.
- The supervising adult agrees to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of the minor parent or his/her child to CPS.
- The supervising adult agrees to assist and facilitate the minor parent's school attendance and participation in other activities required by MDHHS. At a minimum, the supervising adult will not place any expectations on the minor parent which will impede attendance at school or negatively affect the minor parent's ability to care for his/her child.
- The supervising adult must acknowledge that the MDHHS is not responsible for any payments or expenses beyond those specifically included in the minor parent's FIP grant.
- The supervising adult has the authority and responsibility to set reasonable house rules regarding visitors, curfews, phone usage, and other issues necessary to maintain a safe and stable home. If the minor parent refuses to comply with the rules or if other disputes arise, the supervising adult or the minor parent may request the intervention of the specialist. If they are unable to resolve the issue, the supervising adult may request the minor parent to move to another appropriate setting.
- The supervising adult is not responsible for providing child care. The minor parent may be eligible for child care payments according to policies of the Child Development and Care program.

Obtain a signed, written agreement specifying the responsibilities and expectations for the minor parent, the supervising adult, and the department.

PAYMENTS

The minor parent's FIP grant must be paid to a protective payee. The supervising adult should be the protective payee; see BAM 420.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

As a condition of eligibility, a minor parent must attend high school full-time. See BEM 245 for the definition of high school and full-time.

Minor parents who have graduated from high school must participate in Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH).

Failure to meet the above requirements causes ineligibility for the minor parent and his/her child. This requirement applies to all minor parents, including those who are living with a parent, stepparent, legal guardian, or other adult relative and are not the grantee.

If an applicant minor parent will not agree to attend school deny or close the FIP Eligibility Determination Group (EDG). A minor parent whose FIP is closed for this reason must reapply and enroll in school before assistance can be granted; see BEM 245, Regaining FIP Eligibility After Previously Failing Student Enrollment/Attendance Requirement.

VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Verify good cause for living arrangement reasons as needed.

Verify school enrollment and attendance at application, redetermination, and at each birthday.

VERIFICATION SOURCES

- DHS-3380, Verification of Student Information.
- Telephone contact with the school.

School Attendance

See BEM 245.

LEGAL BASE**FIP**

42 USC 608(a)(4)

42 USC 608(a)(5)

MCL 380.10

MCL 380.1561

MCL 400.57 et seq.

Mich Admin Code, R400.3112

45 CFR 233.107